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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, October 13, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NOTES FOR FOOD SHOPPERS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, and the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

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Listeners, more news for food-shoppers today. Just arrived from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture and the Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration are the regular fortnightly notes on prices and supplies of seasonal foods.

The fruit buys this month are apples and grapes. The predictions are that the price of apples and grapes will be the lowest of the year this month. Big crops of both these fruits are being harvested this season. And October is also the month for peak marketings of casaba melons and 5 important vegetables -- cauliflower, parsnips, turnips, parsley, and sweetpotatoes. The low point in prices of late-grown potatoes, cabbage and onions also comes this month when the harvest of these vegetables reaches its peak.

The economists say that there will probably be no material change in food costs this month, but they may go down slightly with what the economists call "the downward pressure from fruits and vegetables." Egg and butter prices will probably go up seasonally. Poultry prices will probably stay "as is," or even rise slightly because of small supplies of fresh fowls and broilers. This is contrary to the usual poultry price trend which generally is downward toward the last half of the year. But at least most of the late-grown vegetables will be dropping in price this month.

The housewife shopper may be glad to hear that the high point of meat prices seems to have been reached. No marked changes in the price of meat expected for the rest of the year, except in pork. Lamb prices will remain around present levels. But pork prices will probably go down seasonally during the next 3 months. Prices of better-grade beef will probably begin to go down during the first half of 1938 when supplies of better grade cattle, fed from this year's large corn crop, move to market in volume. Recent high beef prices have been due mostly to extremely short supplies of better grades resulting from the smaller supplies of feed. And those smaller supplies of feed were the result of last year's drought.

Back to the apple crop for a moment. Apple prices are well below last year's level because of a 70 percent increase in production! Apple prices usually go down from June through October and then go up until the new crop is ready in the following summer. But because of the big 1937 apple crop, the price of apples probably will not rise as much as usual and better apples will take up a larger proportion of the apples on the market.

Looking ahead to Thanksgiving, which after all isn't so far away -- looking ahead to supplies for the coming holidays, the economists say that fewer turkeys and poultry in general will be on the market, but that there will be larger supplies of the "fixin's" to go with them. The 1937 turkey crop will be about a tenth smaller than last year's record production, but we will have about as many turkeys as in '32 and '33. This year turkeys will probably weigh more than last year and come to market earlier. About a tenth of the crop will go to market before November and about a half during November. That will leave less than the usual amount for turkey dinners during December and January. As for prices, the smaller supplies of fresh poultry lead the economists to believe that during the 1937 holiday season, we'll be spending more for turkey or other poultry than we did last year.

Speaking of turkey reminds me of cranberries. Certainly cranberries head the list of "fixin's" for the holidays. The predictions are for plenty of cranberries this year. The crop will be a quarter larger than last year's crop.

Plenty of nuts for the holidays, too. Supplies of almonds, walnuts, filberts, and pecans will be a good deal larger than a year ago.

As for vegetables, with the exception of onions, the crop of most vegetables will be larger than a year ago. And potato and cabbage prices will be way down below their 1936 level.

Here's a little special news about cauliflower. As you may know, the October supplies of cauliflower come mainly from the Long Island area. Long Island cauliflower is noted for its quality. And the report is that the October cauliflower crop will be larger than a year ago and considerably above average. The heaviest movement of Long Island cauliflower comes during October but the markets continue to sell it during December.

As for grapefruit and oranges, those from the Florida 1938-crop are already moving to market and you can expect to see more and more of them during the remainder of the year. As yet shipments of Florida oranges are still small. And grapefruit marketings have been much smaller than a year ago because the crop has ripened late this year. But higher maturity standards for grapefruit this year have resulted in better fruit on the market. Though the economists haven't yet made estimates of this year's grapefruit production, they say that probably this year's crop will not be so large as the record crop of last year. California Valencia or summer oranges are still moving to market. The first shipments of California Navel or winter oranges are not expected until next month. What about the price of oranges? It will probably go down when marketings increase.
